



Department of Defense Legacy Resource Management Program

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Sustainable Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs) for Effective Management on Military Bases and Adjacent Lands across Florida

TRANSITION PLAN

Kristina Serbesoff-King
The Nature Conservancy Florida Chapter
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Transition Plan

**AKA – You, too, can create and sustain a
Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area!**

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Many successes have been realized in Florida through our Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs) and their statewide umbrella organization, the Florida Invasive Species Partnership (FISP). Starting in July 2009, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), with funding from the Department of Defense (DoD) Natural Resource Legacy Program, conducted a three-year project to create, strengthen and sustain CISMAs in regions that would help to buffer military lands from re-infestation by invasive species.

The strategy behind involving DoD in this effort was threefold: 1) TNC already had established relationships with the targeted bases, 2) the project would allow TNC to engage multiple bases and military branches within one project, and 3) DoD was an important large landowner within each of the targeted areas. Additionally, involving multiple bases and military branches in an effort to address a common natural resource threat allowed TNC to be eligible for funding from the DoD Natural Resources Legacy Program.

The DoD Legacy Program provides funds for projects, including regional ecosystem management initiatives, that assist DoD in protecting and enhancing resources while supporting military readiness (www.dodlegacy.org). Three principles guide the Legacy program: stewardship, leadership, and partnership. TNC submitted a project proposal that focused on a statewide and DoD-recognized natural resource threat, invasive species, and allowed TNC staff to take a leadership role to engage installation staff and local partners to address this threat. This was a perfect fit for the Legacy program and TNC was awarded funds to implement the project for three consecutive years.

With the help of FISP, Florida's CISMAs, DoD and many great partners in Florida, this was a hugely successful project that not only benefitted the six CISMAs that were directly involved with the DoD bases, but ultimately provided tools that could be used by all of Florida's 17 CISMAs as well as other cooperative invasive species partnerships throughout the nation. The CISMAs that were involved in this project will continue to evolve and change depending on current circumstances and staffing changes, but the CISMAs will be able to remain intact because of the networking and resource-sharing components, and because the majority of the efforts are divided rather than dependent on one or two agencies. While this DoD Legacy Program project funding has concluded, all of the partners are committed to building upon the foundation that has been laid for future endeavors, and TNC will remain

involved in all the CISMAs through direct involvement in FISP and through direct involvement in CISMAs where TNC has on-the-ground staff.

There is no question that the funding provided by the DoD Legacy Program was essential for the coordination and expansion of CISMAs throughout Florida in a relatively short period of time. In addition to covering substantial project costs, the involvement with DoD personnel was invaluable and provided an exceptional opportunity to build upon existing relationships and to initiate new ones. The ongoing costs associated with the CISMAs moving forward will, as always, be shared and leveraged by the partners according to priorities and available resources. Due to the nature and threat of invasive non-native species, this issue will require and likely provide sources of funding for a very long time. With the CISMA structures constantly improving, and by developing tools and methods to improve efficiency and reduce costs, the CISMAs will remain a model for successful invasive non-native species management.

The primary lessons learned through this effort are:

1. Endeavor to include all entities in your CISMA, public and private.
2. Not all partners will be part of the initial efforts, don't let that slow down progress, instead choose projects that can be accomplished with the partners at the table. Often, once successes and efficiencies are realized and announced, additional partners will get involved.
3. Recognize and respect that each agency, organization and individual will have a different mission and a different reason for entering the CISMA partnership.
4. Have a plan! It is important to spend some time each year agreeing on collaborative projects and efforts and documenting those decisions in a CISMA workplan.
5. Have clear expectations and a solid structure. Make sure the CISMA has a chair and an active membership base. Clearly define what the role of the chair is, as well as additional positions such as steering committee members and subcommittee chairs. Clear expectations will reduce frustration and the feeling that one person has to do it all.

During this project, a wealth of documents, tools, guidelines, etc., were discovered as well as created. This short document is intended to help others quickly find what we consider to be the first and best resources in order to create and/or sustain a Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas. For full reports of each of the phases of this three year project as well as factsheets, go to the DoD Environmental, Safety and Occupational Health Network and Information Exchange (DENIX) website <http://www.denix.osd.mil/> and type in "CISMA" in the search box.

Tools created for CISMAs as part of this project:

(All can be found at <http://www.floridainvasives.org/howto.html>, under the header “How to Create and Sustain a CISMA/CWMA”)

- **Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area Five Year Strategic Plan Template.** There are two versions of this template, one in Word the other in Excel. This template provides recommended strategies for partners to cooperatively address the management of invasive species in a geographic area. The Excel version allows for a CISMA to sort strategies by goal, taxa or year, allowing for easier development of an annual workplan or subcommittee plan.
- **Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) Annual Work Plan - Guidance Document.** This one page document is a simple five-step process to completing an Annual Workplan and is intended as a companion to a CISMA’s Five Year Strategic Plan.
- **Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) Organization Chart and Job Descriptions.** This three page document has a diagram of a generic CISMA organization chart and job descriptions identifying the time commitment, busy season, benefits, responsibilities and measurables associated with each CISMA job. These can be used by CISMAs and other invasive species partnerships throughout the nation to assist with developing these roles in their partnerships.

Existing Resources that were used as part of our project:

- **CWMA Cookbook: A Recipe for Success. A Step-by-Step Guide on How to Develop a Cooperative Weed Management Area in the Eastern United States.** This guide was created by the Midwest Invasive Plant Network and can be downloaded, along with some great supporting PowerPoint’s, at http://mipn.org/cwma_resources.html
- **CISMA/CWMA Website Cookbook. A Step-by-Step Guide on How to Develop a Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area Website.** This guide was created by the University of Georgia, Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health in cooperation with the Florida Invasive Species Partnership and can be downloaded, along with a website template zip file, at <http://www.floridainvasives.org/howto.html>, under the header “How to create a CISMA/CWMA website.”
- **Monthly Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas Webinars.** The Florida Invasive Species Partnership hosts monthly WebEx calls for all Florida CISMAs during the months of January through October. This idea was borrowed from the New York Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISMs). The purpose of both the Florida and New York calls is to foster cross communications between CISMAs/PRISMs and to provide a venue for online technical presentations. Information on past and present WebEx calls can be found at:
 - Florida CISMAs - <http://www.floridainvasives.org/cismas.html>
 - New York PRISMs - http://www.nyis.info/?action=prism_partners

As we continue to build on our successes, additional resources and links will be posted on the Florida Invasive Species Partnership website <http://www.floridainvasives.org>.